

# Holy Land Travel Tips

## Travel Insurance:

- Travel insurance for health/medical coverage as well as for trip cancellation/interruption is highly recommended. A quote for insurance through Allianz Travel will be sent to you via email within a few days of your tour deposit. Please check your spam folder if you do not see this travel insurance email within a week of enrolling on the tour.

## Baggage:

- You may take one large suitcase (a 26" or 28" Pullman will probably be sufficient for your needs).
- The maximum weight of any bag is fifty (50) lbs for domestic and international flights. The maximum dimension of any bag is 62 inches (figure the bag dimension by adding the length plus width plus height).
- Any excess luggage charges must be paid at the airport when you are checking in.
- Place nametags on the handles of your luggage. Make sure you place a nametag inside your bag (in case the outside tag is lost in transfer) that includes your name, address, telephone number, and email address.

**You are also allowed to take along one carry-on bag.** Please remember that this must be small enough to either fit under your seat or in the overhead compartment. **Air travelers may carry limited quantities of liquids, gels and aerosols in their carry-on bag when going through security checkpoints.** Each container must be three ounces or smaller and be enclosed in only one, quart-size, zip-top, clear plastic bag. **For more information on the Transportation Security Administration's regulations, visit their website at: <http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information>.**

We advise taking trial size toilet articles, cosmetics, **all** medicines, slippers, jacket/sweater, camera, jewelry/valuables, and **a change of clothing** in your carry-on bag so you can be prepared if your large bag is delayed. It is also beneficial to pack an extra outfit in your traveling companion's checked luggage, if possible.

## Clothing:

- Casual and comfortable clothing works best for touring.
- You may want a nicer outfit for a special dinner or evening out, but try to keep your wardrobe casual.
- Pack light by taking clothing that is color-coordinated and that may be worn several times during the tour.
- Give special attention to your SHOES. A pair of broken-in walking shoes with low or flat heels and rubber soles will ensure your comfort while walking during the tour. Flip-flops are fine for beach and pool, but are not appropriate while touring.
- Be mindful of dressing modestly, particularly when visiting churches and holy sites. A general rule of thumb is to be prepared to cover your shoulders and knees for entering such sites. NO short shorts or spaghetti straps or bare-midriff tops are allowed. Bermuda shorts or capri-length pants are allowed. If wearing a sleeveless top, take a scarf or shawl to cover your shoulders when in a holy place. Muslims and religious Jews are more conservative in their dress, so Americans will feel awkward in more revealing outfits.

## Packing Checklist:

- Be prepared with warmer layers for days in Jerusalem as mornings and evenings can be cool, even in the summer. An all-weather jacket with removable liner works well.
- Take an ample supply of toilet articles, cosmetics, **a washcloth** (washcloths are usually not supplied in Israel hotels) and other personal items you use. Place your larger liquid and cream containers into plastic bags inside your luggage.
- Liquids expand at higher altitudes, so keep bottles just three-quarters full and be sure they have twist-down caps.
- Bring a small amount of detergent if you wish, for hand washing your clothing in your hotel room.
- Ziploc bags (for collecting rocks, sand, etc.) and snack foods are good items to remember to bring.
- Bring your bathing suit in case you want to be baptized in the River Jordan, or swim in the Dead Sea.

# Holy Land Tour Travel Tips

## Electrical Current:

- The current will be 220 AC, and you will need an adapter plug to fit in the differently shaped electrical outlets.
- Most cell phones, laptops, and tablets are dual voltage and require only an adapter plug to fit into the outlet.
- Other appliances (hair dryers, razors, etc) **may** be dual voltage; determine this by checking the small label on your charger or appliance where it says "INPUT." If this reads "110 V – 240 V" then you will only need an adapter plug. If it says just "110 V" then it is single-voltage and will burn out if used without a voltage converter.
- Electrical converters and adapter plugs can be purchased in the luggage or travel department of most major retail stores.

## Drinking Water:

You may drink the water in the hotel and the water served to you in restaurants. Bottled water will be available on your bus; note that there may be a small charge for this purchase.

## Health-related issues:

- For international travel, it is always recommended that your standard immunizations be up to date. These include measles, mumps, rubella (MMR vaccine), diphtheria, tetanus, and polio. Please check with your physician for further advice.
- Some doctors recommend a mild antibiotic during the tour to prevent a respiratory infection brought on by dust or exposure during flights, airports or someone who is sick.
- The busy touring schedule, dietary changes, and jet lag place heavy demands on your system. Leisure time is built into the tour, and we suggest using it as a resting period.
- A sleeping pill may be beneficial during the long overseas flight as you adjust to the time change.
- You may want to bring along some *Imodium A-D* if you are prone to an upset stomach from changes in water, irregular sleep, etc. It may be nothing more than a nervous stomach resulting from excitement over the trip.
- The change in food and water or loss of sleep may factor into your problems. At the first sign of an ailment, take what your physician has recommended for such an occasion.
- A doctor is on call at the hotel both day and night. You may phone the desk and ask for the "house doctor." The call will be at your own expense and is typically rather expensive. Keep records of your expenses as documentation for your health insurance claim.
- Make sure you bring enough prescription medication with you to cover several extra days if your trip home is delayed.

## Weather:

City		Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Jerusalem	C	6-11	7-14	8-16	12-21	15-25	17-27	19-29	19-29	18-28	16-26	12-19	8-14
	F	43-53	44-57	47-61	53-69	60-77	63-81	66-84	66-86	65-82	60-78	54-67	47-56
Tel Aviv	C	9-18	9-19	10-20	12-22	17-25	19-28	21-30	22-30	20-31	15-28	12-25	9-19
	F	49-65	48-66	51-69	54-72	63-77	67-83	70-86	72-86	69-89	59-83	54-76	47-66
Tiberias	C	9-18	9-20	11-22	13-27	17-32	20-35	23-37	24-37	22-35	19-32	15-26	11-20
	F	48-65	49-67	51-72	56-80	62-89	68-95	73-98	75-99	71-95	65-89	59-78	53-68

**SPRING/FALL** (late Mar/Apr/May/late Sep/Oct/Nov): Daytime temperatures will be very pleasant: normally in the 60s and 70s throughout most of the country (though still hot, at the Red and Dead Seas). Jerusalem will typically be in the 40s and 50s in the evening. There may be some rain – but usually nothing torrential.

**WINTER** (Dec/Jan/Feb/early Mar): Some winters are mild and sunny, some severe and overcast. There can heavy rain and, in January and February, even snow occasionally. It will often be in the 50s and 60s during the day in most places, but only in the 40s in Jerusalem and the Galilee hills - and colder at night.

# Holy Land Travel Tips

## **Shopping:**

Israel is the place to buy religious souvenirs. Shop in the markets of the old cities for traditional styles and materials. Whether you're looking for silver Judaica or hand-made *dreidels* (spinning tops), olive wood-carved crucifixes and nativity scenes or ornately decorated Bibles, masbacha prayer beads or a kafiya and akal set, you won't be disappointed. There are many opportunities to buy artwork. Old Jaffa in particular has a large number of art galleries. Shop in the markets for good deals on oriental rugs, Armenian ceramics, embroidery and needlework and other arts and crafts. Skin-care products made from mineral-rich Dead Sea mud are also excellent souvenirs.

You will have opportunity to visit high quality shops while on your Holy Land tour. Identify yourself as part of a Dehoney Travel group to receive the best prices.

***PLEASE NOTE: Should you choose to make purchases elsewhere, Dehoney Travel is unable to provide follow-up assistance if any questions or issues arise after the purchase is made.***



Visitors buying goods worth 125 Israeli Shekels or more at a Ministry of Tourism approved shop (there are many) are entitled to a refund of Value Added Tax, or VAT (currently 17%) at the port of departure. In order to qualify you must be a foreign passport holder who is not an Israeli citizen, and you must make your purchases in foreign currency (cash or international credit card).

## **Customs:**

- Residents of the United States are required to declare the full retail price of all articles purchased abroad.
- Most products from Israel and Jordan may enter the United States either free of duty or at a reduced rate under the U.S. free trade agreements with those countries.
- On your return flight, you will receive a customs declaration form. Fill it out in full.
- In most cases you may import \$800 of merchandise duty free (based on the retail price) into the United States.
- Most articles in excess of your exemption but under \$1800 will be assessed a tax at the flat rate of 3%.

## **Spending Money:**

ATMs are available to obtain local currency. Larger shops will accept major credit cards such as Visa or MasterCard (but usually not American Express or Discover Card). Contact your bank for details about their charges for overseas transactions.

**Prior to the trip you should inform your credit/debit card companies that you will be traveling overseas and tell them your travel dates and the countries you will visit. Some credit/debit card companies will automatically decline purchases made overseas unless you have alerted them ahead of time about your travel plans.**

- While in Israel, most lunches will be at your own expense. Plan on spending as little as \$6 (for a light lunch such as cheese/crackers/cola) to as much as \$15 - \$20 for this meal each day. For example, in Bethlehem the group will often enjoy a "sit down" lunch at a nicer restaurant where you should expect to pay about \$20-\$25 per person.
- Please keep in mind that breakfasts and dinners will be an extensive buffet at your hotel, so you may prefer to have only a light lunch – or even bring along some granola bars, peanut butter crackers, etc., limiting your lunch expense to just a soda or water purchase.
- Take \$75 - \$100 in small bills so that you can pay street vendors with exact change for soft drinks, bottled water, small souvenir purchases, etc.

## **Please Do Not Forget:**

- **Bible and Guidebook:** Bring your Bible (or Bible app downloaded for offline use) and Guidebook. These will come in handy when your group leader and guide reference specific incidents on the tour.
- **Music:** If you have inspirational music that you enjoy and would like to bring along, opportunities may arise for sharing it with others during worship experiences at the sites, on the bus, etc.
- **Camera:** Bring plenty of storage on memory cards. These are expensive overseas, so anticipate your needs appropriately in order to avoid running out. Be sure to pack extra camera batteries.

# Holy Land Tour Travel Tips

## Food:

The enormous variety that is Israeli cuisine reflects the society: Israel's food has been greatly influenced by immigrants from more than 80 countries - from Morocco to Hungary, Ethiopia to Argentina. Add to that inspiration from its Middle Eastern and Mediterranean neighbors and the Far East destinations visited by many Israeli backpackers, and you have a veritable culinary melting pot.

Israel's food has also been influenced by Jewish and Islamic dietary requirements. Jewish (or **kosher**) dietary requirements are that meat and dairy products are not served during the same meal - this makes it relatively easy for vegetarians to find places to eat out because many restaurants are dairy-only. In addition, consumption of meat from certain animals and seafood is also forbidden. Note that although kosher food is predominant in Israel's hotels, many restaurants are not kosher.

Try some *falafel* (a sandwich of fried chickpeas and herbs, served with salad in pita bread) and *shwarma* (pita wrapped around thin slices of grilled meat), both served with hummus of course. Take-away *mangal*, (barbecued meat) means grilled skewers of lamb, poultry and a variety of offal including foie gras over large, flat, freshly baked pitas. Some of the best places to find these foods are the streets around Machane Yehuda market in Jerusalem and the Tikva Quarter of South Tel Aviv.

Eat at a fish restaurant at one of Israel's coastal resorts or around the Sea of Galilee. As well as St. Peter's fish, Israel's only native fish, freshwater fish such as salmon and trout are also on offer, the results of Israel's pioneering in artificial pool harvesting of freshwater fish. A variety of saltwater fish such as red mullet, sea bass, and grouper are available fresh from the Mediterranean. Fresh fish is typically served grilled whole with lemon and garlic.

## **Typical foods found in Israel are...**

**Hummus:** A blend of chickpeas, sesame-seed paste, lemon juice and olive oil, usually served with hot pita. Hummus is only improved upon with a topping of *foul* (pronounced fool), a slow-cooked stew of dried fava beans.

**Tahini:** Savory sesame seed paste.

**Tabbouleh:** A salad of cracked wheat, vegetables and herbs.

**Labaneh:** A sheep's milk yogurt dip

**Kibbeh:** Lamb and cracked wheat patties

**Moroccan cigars:** Deep fried filo sheets stuffed with a mixture of minced lamb, onion, parsley, cumin and cinnamon

## Communications:

- Should you choose to make a direct-dialed phone call from your hotel room back to the US, expect it to cost \$3 - \$4 per minute. Also, if calling this way, there will be a service charge assessed to your room, so be **sure to clear this charge before leaving that particular hotel.**
- **Purchasing an international plan with your cell phone carrier is often much more economical. Wi-Fi calling on most smart phones is an option as well.**

## Pace Yourself:

- The tour can be rigorous, so don't overextend yourself.
- The primary goal of your tour is enjoyment, so do what you can and don't feel guilty about passing up certain events or activities.
- If you need one day to "sleep in" or would like to do some sightseeing on your own, feel free to do it, but make sure you tell group leader so that the group won't be waiting for you.
- When you are on the tour, if you want to remain on the bus while the group gets out, you are more than welcome to do so. This is your tour and we want you to get the most out of your experience without feeling pushed or obligated to participate in everything.

# Holy Land Travel Tips

## Help Your Leaders:

- Your group leader and guide will do their best to make each day as memorable and interesting as possible.
- Help them by leaving both front seats clear for the group leader, guide, and any special lecturer touring with you.
- Do your best to BE ON TIME.
- If you decide to skip a particular day of touring, remember to tell your leader.

## Attitude:

- Try your best to be patient, kind, and understanding. Remember, not all cultures behave the way ours does, so try not to appear demanding or pushy if things don't occur the way you are used to.
- Sometimes the people may not be as efficient or "hurried" as Americans.
- Do not always expect the comfort or luxury that is standard at home.
- Many things will be different, especially the food. However, the best way to broaden your horizons is through experiencing new cultures and lifestyles.
- Since you are guests in the land, our hosts provide the best service available. Please refrain from belittling their best by talking about how much nicer or superior things are in the United States.

## In the Hotel:

- Laundry services are available at the hotel but can be rather expensive, so be sure to inquire about the cost before requesting the service. If you wish to utilize this service, give your clothes to the housekeeper or to the front desk in the morning before leaving the hotel for the day. They will probably have them back to you by the evening or early the next day. The laundry fee will be charged to your room. Make sure to settle the extra charge for the laundry before checking out of the hotel. Laundry service on Friday and Saturday is limited.
- When you request special services and favors from the porters or hotel personnel, we recommend tipping them extra to show your appreciation.
- The regular tips have already been collected and will be distributed to housekeepers and dining room staff for normal service, but extra individual tipping is appreciated when a staff person goes out of their way or beyond the call of duty to assist you.

## Touring:

- We suggest bringing a small backpack or day bag with you on the bus each day. In this bag you can carry your Holy Land guidebook, umbrella, jacket, hat, camera, bottled water and a snack.
- The climate is unpredictable (especially in the winter months), so plan for all types of weather and remember that layering works best.
- Your backpack can easily be stored in the overhead rack on the bus.
- Please make sure you wear good, comfortable walking shoes while touring!
- As with any travel, awareness of who is around you is important. The people of the Middle East are wonderful. They are friendly and helpful. You will enjoy them! But always be aware and keep close track of your personal belongings, especially in busy or crowded areas, or if approached by a pushy vendor or salesperson.
- The most important thing is to leave your fears and misgivings at home. The minute you touch down at Ben Gurion Airport, you will feel very comfortable and welcome. ***This is a beautiful and amazing part of the world. You will come home with a whole new understanding of your faith and the world which gave it birth! The Dehoney Travel Team looks forward to sending you to the Holy Land soon!***



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